The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

JUNE 1949

'O God, Do It Again!'

By MELVIN E. WHEATLEY

A Christian Looks at Democracy

By FRANKLIN D. ELMER, JR.

The Unbroken Promise

By JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK

At Wit's End

By WILLIAM EARL WALDROP

United I Stand

By WILLIAM BLAKE

Christian Cooperation at the Grass Roots

By WALTER R. WARNER

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the July Issue

The sermon entitled "Happiness Is Not an Inalienable Right" will be good reading for Americans at the Independence Day season. It is by FREDERICK M. MEEK, minister of the Old South Church in Boston. The sermon starts off with a reference to the famous statement in the Declaration of Independence as to the "inalienable right" of "the pursuit of happiness."

A good philosophical sermon is that by CARADOC J. MORGAN of Pilgrim Congregational Church, Portland, Ore. His theme is "The Testimony of Time" and the text is Eccl. 1:19: "There is no new thing under the sun."

HAROLD BLAKE WALKER has appeared before in the Pulpit, and his contribution to the July issue is a discussion of the theme, "When God Says No." He considers especially the career of Paul, his text being II Cor. 12:8—"For this thing I besought God thrice, that it might depart from me." Mr. Blake is minister at the First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Ill.

The Dean of Duke University Divinity School, HAROLD A. BOSLEY, recently preached a brief but telling sermon on "We Believe in the Church" at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, and this has been handed to the Pulpit for the next issue.

A sermon addressed to the hearts of men and women is that of BINNEY S. BLACK of Bonar Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Can. His title is "Our Refuge in Dark Days."

There will be a helpful Preacher Problems article, also the other regular features.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

REV. FRANKLIN D. ELMER was formerly pastor of the First Baptist Church, Lockport, N. Y., and now ministers at First Baptist Church in Flint, Mich. He is a graduate of Brown University and of the University of Chicago. He is a poet of marked ability.

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Minister of Central Methodist Church, Stockton, Calif., REV. MELVIN E. WHEATLEY also teaches Bible literature at the College of the Pacific in Stockton. He was pastor of the Centenary Methodist Church before going to Stockton. He received his A.B. at the American University in Washington, D. C., and his B.D. (Summa cum laude) at Drew.

Graduating from the College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky., REV. WILLIAM E. WALDRUP, following a brief pastorate, spent three years as a chaplain during the war. He ministered at Shawnee Christian Church, Louisville, Ky., 1945-48, and is now associate minister at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York city. He conducted a radio program, "The Church By the Side of the Road," over Station WLW while in Louisville.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, REV. WILLIAM BLAKE ministers at First Methodist Church, Wausau, Wis. For four sessions he was revision clerk of the Wisconsin State Senate.

REV. WALTER R. WARNER is pastor of the Methodist Church at Madras, Ore., a home mission church in a new irrigation project of central Oregon. He graduated from Yale Divinity School and has an M.S. in clinical psychology from Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

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THE PULPIT

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE LIFTING of the Berlin blockade and the counter-blockade offers hope that a new phase in Russian-American relations is about to begin. This is the first evidence that the unyielding policy of the Soviet government could be altered or even mitigated. The proposal to abandon both blockades arose in the Kremlin and, to all appearances, took our state department by surprise. It met, however, a prompt and favorable response on the side of the western powers, so that the airlift which has supplied the western zones of Berlin with food and goods for nearly a year can be supplanted by trains and trucks. The cost of the airlift has been enormous, but its magnitude and skill have amazed the world and wrought consternation in the Kremlin. How much hope we may derive from Russia's willingness to resume normal relations in the administration of Berlin remains to be seen. The council of ministers of the four occupying powers is to meet in a few days after this is written. Only when that meeting gets under way will the Soviet attitude be disclosed. It may prove that the Kremlin has reached the conclusion that fair negotiation and cooperation with the west are better than irritation, provocation and threat. Or it may prove that the Russian leaders have decided that the opening of the Far East to Communism will demand all their resources to exploit and consolidate the signal victory in China.

The Cold War—Is It Melting?

The Book of the Month

AMERICAN FREEDOM AND CATHOLIC POWER. *By Paul Blanshard. Beacon Press, Boston, $3.50.*

THIS is the most penetrating analysis of the enormous power exercised by the Roman church that has appeared in our time. The author deals with this power in its two aspects—public affairs and the private lives of the faithful. He shows how the hierarchy has intimidated the makers and administrators of law and the molders of public opinion. And with amazing frankness he shows how the hierarchical priesthood exploits the devotion of the faithful. The Catholic problem is still with us, says Mr. Blanshard. "Essentially the Catholic problem in America is what to do with the hierarchy of the Roman church. The American Catholic *people* have done their best to join the rest of America, but the American Catholic hierarchy . . . has never been assimilated. It is still fundamentally Roman in its spirit and directives. It is an autocratic moral monarchy in a liberal democracy." While the church's claims of numerical growth in recent decades may be discounted, its tremendous growth in power is indisputable. It holds the organs of public opinion in a tight censorship and presents legislatures and executives with the dilemma of supporting Catholic interests or losing the Catholic vote. All this public power is based upon the power exercised by the priesthood over the Catholic people. The author's knowledge of the working of this system is phenomenally intimate. The documentation, mostly from Catholic authorities, makes his case invulnerable. Every Protestant minister simply must have this book. It may be hard to get. The book trade will not exploit it, and it is unlikely that the general press will even review it. But your bookstore will order it from the publisher.

A Thought for the Month

THE GREATEST shock which Christian faith has received in our day is its awakening to its own impotence. It is hard to admit that Christianity, after nearly twenty centuries, has made so little difference in the civilization of that part of the world where it has been the dominant religion. But the fact is indisputable. Something has happened, something very deepgoing. Time was when it was said of Christians that they had turned the world upside down. It is now evident that, despite Christianity, the world has turned upside down *again*. Our society has gone pagan. Once, Christianity molded men's minds. Its great concepts were veritable windows through which Western man looked out upon the whole scene of life. That is true no longer. Today the Christian church faces a task strikingly like that which the early Christians confronted. It has got to turn the world upside down *yet again*. But the church, which has allowed itself to be seduced by the spirit of this pagan world, must itself be turned upside down. It must recapture its own lost gospel. It must recover and reproclaim the great convictions which belong to the genius of Christianity—the absolute sovereignty of God, the creatureliness of man together with man's dignity as the child of God, and the headship of Jesus Christ in the church and over all things. We are faced with the threat of a totalitarian state, not alone from other countries, but in our own as well. Such a demonic state is the supreme enemy of Christianity. It can be resisted only by the divine totalitarianism of the Christian gospel.

The Christian Task Today—

Charles Clayton Morrison

A Christian Looks at Democracy

By FRANKLIN D. ELMER, JR.

CALVIN COOLIDGE said, "The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country." This is a substantial Biblical truth—for in ancient Israel invariably progress in government came from challenge provided by the prophets, or through leadership of men with profound religious insights. It has been equally true in America. "Let us diligently apply the means," said Lincoln, "never doubting that a just God, in his own good time, will give us the rightful results." Therefore the critical study of democracy is a part of the larger obligation of every thoughtful Christian citizen.

Democracy is not new in the world. Government of the people, for the people, and by the people had its beginnings in ancient times; and some of its gravest lessons were learned centuries ago.

LESSONS DEMOCRACY HAS LEARNED

A first lesson was that *a democracy cannot endure unless those who live in it understand its nature and advantages, and are willing to accept its responsibilities.* This lesson was learned by Israel three thousand years ago. When Moses led his people through tortuous years in the wilderness he sought to develop representative government in which power would be shared down through the people. Unfortunately Israel was not ready. After a few generations, when the people had grown increasingly impatient with carrying responsibilities greater than they cared to accept, they demanded a king to rule over them and judge them.

Samuel, who did realize the advantages of self-rule for Israel, tried earnestly to warn them against the liabilities of a dictatorial monarch—but in vain. So Saul was made king, and Israel lost a great historic opportunity for the development of government by the people.

This is a lesson to remember. A people who are not educated to the advantages of self-rule, and not disciplined to accept its responsibilities, will be quite unable to maintain it. Careful education is the only answer. We can never afford to let democracy be taken for granted.

A second lesson, learned at great cost by the ancient Athenians is that *a democracy cannot endure unless it carefully extends its advantages to all who live within it.* The Athenians had a well developed democracy, and under it produced some of the great independent thinkers of history. All who were citizens shared its privileges and responsibilities. The New England town meeting which played a vital part in American history was a direct descendant of Athenian democracy. But Athens failed, because as the power of the state grew into a spreading empire the privileged citizens sought to keep all the advantages of democracy for themselves. Aliens taken into the empire were excluded from full citizenship. It was an intolerable situation, and brought disaster.

Herein lies another challenge for us. The closest we have come to national disaster in America was in the Civil War, which resulted directly from the economic and political disruption stemming from our failure to extend democratic rights to all who were living within our boundaries. And we well know the issues conceived in the institution of slavery are not yet fully resolved. We are still paying the price. And we may be sure our democracy will not be secure until we have extended full privileges, rights, and responsibilities to all who live within our boundaries. "Jim Crow," the polltax, segregated housing for Negroes, racial prejudices and religious discrimination—these are danger signs!

A SPIRITUAL BASIS

The third lesson is being learned bitterly and conclusively in our time. *There can be no real democracy without a spiritual base.*

To our consternation Russia calls herself a democracy. But we know that in terms of what democracy means to us she is not a democracy. The difference between us is that Russia lacks the spiritual base upon which our way of life is established. In Russia it is proclaimed dogmatically that all human rights are created by the state, given to citizens by the state. Therefore all citizens are finally answerable to the state. In contrast, it is our American belief that "man is endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights." The state does not give us our rights—we rather have the state to make our rights secure. Behind each citizen stands the Creator to whom each citizen is finally responsible. And the famous Bill of Rights amended so quickly to our Constitution, has as its notable purpose the protection of the God-given rights of citizens against the encroachments of the state.

In Russia religion is regarded as anti-social, and the establishments of religion as impostors on the social scene. But in America religion is regarded as the very foundation upon which the Constitution and our interpretation of human rights is founded. So important is the role of religion in America that establishments of religion are carefully protected against the compulsion or control of political government.

It is easy to give lip service to this important idea of the spiritual base upon which our nation is established. But unfortunately there are multitudes to whom the idea is not even known, much less understood. Yet

it is fundamental to the character and to the very existence of our democracy.

TEMPTATIONS WHICH WEAKEN DEMOCRACY

Now let us look more closely at democracy, which, after all, is essentially a method of living together. Our Communist neighbors proclaim magnificent ideals, but are forgetful of the necessity of using decent methods to translate those ideals into reality. The result is catastrophic to human rights—precious freedoms are lost, equality becomes regimentation, and the rights of individuals are submerged to the demands of the state. In contrast, our democracy is built on faith that the method is as important as the goal. We believe that if we practice freedom and equality we will achieve more freedom and equality. But at this point we find our gravest weaknesses. For when the responsibilities of freedom and the obligations of equality are spread over the broad base of the whole people, then democracy is weakened just so much by each individual who does not take them seriously.

Because of our individual responsibilities there are certain temptations which besiege us as citizens and to which we all succumb in some measure at one time or another.

There is, first, the temptation to believe in our country instead of in our neighbors. This is a subtle temptation and a dangerous one. Yet there are hosts of Americans with great patriotic fervor who believe gloriously in America, but who have no real faith in the folks on Main Street, who are suspicious of the members of other racial or religious or nationality groups living in their own city, who are unable to put real trust in their employers or their employees, and who look upon ideas which are different or new as dangerous and un-American. But as Dr. Fosdick has put it, "The genius of democracy is to believe in men, their worth, their possibilities, their capacities for self-direction." And for the welfare of our nation we do well to remember the truth so succinctly stated by that homely and rugged American philosopher T. V. Smith from the mid-western hills, "Only men who respect men can save mankind."

ARROGANT IDEAS A PERIL

Second is the temptation on the part of individuals and groups to believe their particular ideas and plans for the country so superior that they must prevail at all costs. This is a vicious temptation, and most destructive of democracy. We have seen it work in the arrogant lawlessness of the Ku Klux Klan when threatening warnings against individuals, and the evils of lynching, have been perpetrated outside the law under the asserted justification of high and holy motives. Never in such extreme bad taste, but often with the same fundamental undemocratic character, we have seen this temptation succumbed to by members of veterans organizations, labor unions, and even churches. And of course it is far from unknown in the ranks of privilege and power. It is a temptation that attacks us all, and to which we are all vulnerable. Its only antidote is a vast patience and a reverent humility in the knowledge that we, too, can be wrong.

A third temptation would have us give top priority to self-interest instead of social service. Of late this has become common in America—and is desperately serious. In its most common form it is represented by the citizen who does not care enough for the public welfare to go to the polls and vote—and half the eligible voters were in this class in the recent presidential election. In its more serious form it is manifest in men of great creative capacities and leadership skills who refuse every opportunity to serve in public positions of responsibility and power with the inadequate answer, "I cannot afford to." Surely no greater contribution can be made to mankind just now than in the strengthening of democracy. My hat is off to those men who, at real personal sacrifice of income, are fighting democracy's battles in legislative halls, public health services, and in many a forgotten or violently criticized public office. And how tragic it is when there are others of equal or greater ability who are so busy manufacturing chewing gum and kitchen gadgets, or steering divorce cases through the courts, that they "cannot afford" to accept public office. Was there not, long ago, a man of simple men who said quietly to his disciples, "He that is greatest among you shall be the servant of all."

OPPORTUNITIES WHICH MAKE US GREAT

Having suggested temptations which cultivate our weaknesses let us examine some opportunities through which we have developed our greatness as a people. Of these, of course, none has been more significant than *the opportunity to develop human relationships across all the barriers of creed and class and race.* This we are doing in America, and we are doing it not alone for ourselves but for the benefit of the world. No question is more insistent today than this: "Is it possible for people of all the different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds in the world to live together in peace?" We are proving, in America, that it is possible. Humanity which was dispersed in dim antiquity from the mythical Tower of Babel to the four corners of earth, has been sending delegations from the four corners of the earth to participate in the great American experiment. The news from here is good. The time has come when man can fulfill the dream of one common language and one people symbolized at Babel. Of course we have not achieved perfection in these relationships as yet in America—but the progress we are making is indication enough that the case is proved. And so America stands as a true prophet of One World.

Second is the opportunity to develop ideas in an atmosphere of freedom. I think of America as a great human laboratory where all manner of ideas are developed and tested in the fires of human experience. In religion we have long since outdone the famous 57 varieties. Every possible facet of Christianity is examined and proclaimed within our boundaries. This has its liabilities, but it also has its possibilities. In

education we are scarcely less diverse—and one can find schools ranging from the crossroads schoolhouse with primitive interpretation of the three R's to the effete finishing school of the exclusive eastern community; and from the great state universities which are under the constant vigilance of politicians and pressure groups to the strong free universities where the latest theories of education are given careful development. So, too, in the world of business and industry there is a freedom of ideas. In America a man may buy an automobile manufactured by a private corporation owned by thousands of stockholders, drive it for endless thousands of miles on highways owned and operated by the public, purchase his insurance from a mutual insurance company, buy his gasoline from a cooperative gasoline pump, and have his car repaired by a small business man who owns and operates his own facilities. Yet all these varieties of business are interlocked in the framework of freedom of enterprise. We are no more bound to one economic system than we are bound to one interpretation of religion, one theory of education, or to one political party—and this is all to the good for it means that if there is a better way of doing things it will be discovered and proved in this vast laboratory of ideas which is America.

BANNING RACE PREJUDICE

Finally there is the opportunity to develop personalities uninhibited by race or class distinctions. Surely there are some who will wish to stop me here and say, "But America is full of oppressive prejudices." To be sure it is. And yet every group in America is free to prove itself worthy and to make a place for itself on the American scene. In Hitler's Germany the Jews had no opportunity to fight for their own freedom. The government was against them. In America the Negro occupies a low place on the ladder of general social acceptability—but the Negro has full right to fight for his own place in the sun, and you and I, as Christians, have the right to join him in his struggle if we will. This may not be much—but it is a fundamental and important ingredient of our democratic way. Furthermore there is every indication that the democratic process is at work at this point. As in most things democratic, it is slow. But every one of us who joins the battle to give equal opportunity for social acceptability to all will increase the tempo of the struggle and help to speed the inevitable result. And we can not be unaware of the fact that the position of respect and influence America has in the world is giving the desired victory of social equality an almost terrifying urgency.

We must remember that democracy was not designed for the cultivation of hot-house plants. We represent a rugged type of life, in which the struggle of ideas is more often rough and tumble than placid. We can be sure that any man who stands courageously for advanced convictions will have his convictions sorely and severely tested before they have achieved any general acceptance. Here again is a desirable feature of democracy. And while we remember with chagrin that Abraham Lincoln was the object of most unseemly villification, and that Jane Adams was dropped from the rolls of a Christian church because she was considered not Christian enough, still we would not depreciate the value of the social fires through which our greatest personalities have walked unscathed in the process of their social testing. This is far superior to the rigid social systems which have produced the often soft and flabby personalities of the lords and ladies in other lands.

DEMOCRACY IS YOU

Our world needs an America made up of rugged people with rugged minds and rugged faith. And as Christian citizens we have tremendous responsibilities. The democratic method by which we live needs the constant criticism of devout and thoughtful people, and the goals toward which we strive as a nation need constant clarification and renewal that we may better fulfill the high destiny we have in the human family.

Democracy, after all, is you. Democracy is you and your neighbor. Democracy is you and your neighbor and your neighbor's neighbor. It is this and nothing else. It is no more—and no less. Democracy is you. And if you would seek to discover its character and its quality, then look first into the hidden depths of your own heart.

THE TIME calls for a creative Christianity. Preaching and praying are now a heavy responsibility and a glorious opportunity. The war was brought on by words, and war can be averted by the right kind of words. . . . It is the duty of Christians to think and talk in accordance with the teachings of the Christian religion, to abate the consternation and the fear and the hatred in the world today.

RANDOLPH RAY.

THERE COMES a crisis in any birth-hour. We are in one now. We must question, as men have never questioned, the possible advance in corporate life from control by justice—which we haven't by any means reached—to control by love. Can the life of nations, like all life in the natural order, be not only accepted, but redeemed? Frankly, we do not know. Still we "groan and travail," waiting for our redemption.

VIDA D. SCUDDER.

IF THE UNIVERSE has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be a word without meaning. Atheism is too simple.

C. S. LEWIS.

IT IS NOT the function of religion to solve perplexities. Its function is rather to give a man courage to face perplexities.

"O, God, Do It Again!"

By MELVIN E. WHEATLEY

IN Nottingham, England, is the Wesleyan Chapel where William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was converted. A memorial tablet marks the spot where there this notable friend of the friendless received his baptism of spiritual power. Salvation Army leaders from around the world journey to that chapel as to a shrine. One day an aged colored man in the uniform of the Army was found by the minister of the chapel standing with uplifted eyes before the tablet. "Can a man say his prayers here?" he asked. "Of course," was the minister's answer, "a man can say his prayers here." And the old Salvation Army officer went down on his knees and, lifting his hands before the tablet prayed: "O, God, do it again! Do it again!"

That prayer takes on special meaning as today we stand within the spiritual shrine of Pentecost. With minds fixed on that dramatic symbol of the birthday of the Christian Church how can we help but lift our hands and humbly pray, "O, God, do it again!"

WE NEED THE CONVICTION OF PENTECOST

For something happened in that upper room that needs to be repeated in our day. On precisely what happened even the New Testament scholars do not agree. And yet, though the details are a matter of debate, the results are a matter of record. The eternal quality of life which Easter had proved available to the disciples became a reality within the disciples. Convictions which they held concerning the living God became an experience which they had of the living God. The promise of the Holy Spirit coming to them became the presence of the Holy Spirit moving thru them. Whereas they came to Jerusalem out of a passive sense of duty, they left Jerusalem with an active sense of devotion. Whereas they came merely hopeful, they left more helpful. Whereas they came expecting the end of the old world, they left erecting the beginning of a new world. Thus, the Christian Church was born—in a living experience of the Spirit of God. And thus must it be re-born today.

"Religion," wrote Lord Morley, "is a belt that has slipped off the driving wheel of the world." And so it has for great hosts of individuals. About God they sing, "I get along without you very well," and in one sense they do, because what they want they do not need God to get. They worship at counters instead of at altars; they worry about sales and not about souls; they quote prices but never say prayers. In all their dizzy whirling they have no binding purpose.

But I do not happen to be talking about them today. I am talking to us—to those of us who by our very presence here this morning indicate that, in name at least, we are geared to God's power, committed to his kingdom, and devoted to his church. To those of us whose frequent complaint is not that religion has slipped off the drive-wheel of our lives but that it is slipping *on* the drive-wheel. The belt is connected but it slides over us instead of taking hold of us. We worry about our souls but do not work on them. We say prayers but never pray them! And so it is for us the prayer is lifted, "O, God, do it again!"

TRUE ENTHUSIASM FOR CHRIST

Change our lukewarm fidelity to Christ into an acute fever of enthusiasm. Turn our sigh of resignation as we plod toward church into a song of anticipation. Convert our second-hand convictions about God into an original, living experience of God. Repeat in us the spiritual miracle of Pentecost! But if we are in earnest we must do more than make the request; we must fulfill the conditions whereby the request can be granted. Taking our cue, therefore, from the early church, the minimum requirements become clear.

To begin, we must prepare ourselves thru prayer! It seemed to happen all at once, that surge of courage and confidence, that coming of strength and power. But it did not. It was the consummation of days of meditation. "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer." And so must it ever be. We say, we do not pray because God does not seem real to us. More truthfully we should say that God does not seem real to us because we do not pray. It is the word of Jesus, the testimony of the saints, and the experience of ordinary laymen from that day to this—the way to realize the presence of God is to practice the presence of God, and to practice the presence of God means to pray.

Prayer is more than an act; it is an assumption and an attitude as well. The assumption of prayer is the confidence that something can happen between man and God. The attitude of prayer is the expectation that something is going to happen between man and God. The act of prayer is that something happening between man and God. What we seem inclined to forget in our day is that the assumption and attitude are quite as important as the act. "Miracles take place," said Luther, "not because they are performed but because they are believed." That was true of the miracle of flight. The Wright brothers believed it—then they performed it. It was true of the miracle of radium. Madame Curie believed it; then she discovered it.

WE MUST EXPECT RESULTS

The attitude of expectancy is quite as necessary as confidence. One of the paradoxes of our age, however, seems to be that while we have come to the point of

expecting anything to happen in the physical realm, we expect nothing to happen in the spiritual. Gullible enough to believe in Orson Wells' attack from Mars; suggestible enough to see flying saucers in the air; credible enough to take supersonic speeds for granted, we are yet so skeptical of spiritual achievements that we write prayer off as superstition or at best auto-suggestion.

"The influence of prayer on the human mind and body," said Alexis Carrel, "is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying relationships. When we pray we line ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power of the universe. We ask that a part of this power be apportioned to our needs. Even in asking our human deficiencies are filled and we arise strengthened and repaired." Just because it is so vital a process, therefore, we shall merely be pretending to want a living experience of the presence of God's Spirit in our lives, until we make a place in our thoughts and habits for the assumption, the attitude and the act of prayer.

But there is a second clue coming out of the experience of the early church. "When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place." That combination of facts is not a coincidence but a consequence. Having prepared themselves thru prayer they fortified themselves thru a Christ-centered fellowship. To be sure, fellowship on some level is essential if life is to be human. God has made us for each other and we are incomplete until we find stimulation and fulfillment in and thru each other. We are like bricks. One brick, by itself, may serve many purposes. You can crack walnuts with it; use it for a door stop or to drive stakes, but however many uses you find for it, it never fulfills its function as a brick until it is joined with other bricks—because it is the very nature of bricks to belong together.

THE NECESSITY OF THE CHRIST-CENTERED FELLOWSHIP

But if fellowship on some level is necessary for us to realize our humanity, Christ-centered fellowship becomes essential for us to approximate our divinity. The history of the Christian church is the chronological extension of that truth. Whenever in the past the Christian fellowship has attempted to be something other than Christ-centered it has lost its power. At Corinth in the first century it became preacher-centered and Paul had to rush to the rescue. At Rome in the 16th century it became pope-centered and Luther had to liberate it. In England in the 18th century it became tradition-centered and Wesley had to revive it. In America in the 20th century it became Bible-centered and we are just now recovering from the "feudin" of the modernist Martins and the fundamentalist Coys.

Whenever Christ has ceased to be the kindling camp fire around which the circle of fellowship has formed the church has subsequently generated heat instead of light; produced ugly ashes rather than radiant flames; been the source of death instead of life.

When, on the other hand, Christ has been at the center the fellowship has derived from him a warmth and glow. For the genius of fellowship around a campfire, you see, is that all sit facing the same center. So the genius of fellowship around Christ is that all are exposed alike to his influence. Looking at each other thru the glow of his Spirit we no longer even see those colors and features which seem so important when we have our backs to him. So easily the Christian circle extends to the ends of the earth, to transcend divisions of race and nation, color and class; to include Europeans and Asiatics, Africans and Americans. We become mellowed toward one another because the light of his life focuses more on what we can be than what we have been. Centered on Christ we become a spiritual community. "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place." Having prepared themselves through prayer they fortified themselves through Christ-centered fellowship; and so must we! The story of Pentecost appears in the book of Acts. And that too is no coincidence but a consequence. For the sense of God's presence became real to those early disciples when after kneeling together in prayer, and sitting together in fellowship, they stood together in service. "And Peter," writes Luke, "stood up, with the eleven." That is an authentic sequence for our day. The power of God's Spirit in our lives must be sought to be found; it must be shared to grow; it must be used to live.

DANGERS LIE IN THE SAFE HARBOR

There is a story in the annals of the British Navy which tells that on one occasion a destroyer was lying in a harbor of the West Indies, where five other ships of various nationalities were anchored. Suddenly a furious storm descended, with a wild wind and great waves sweeping right into the harbor! What did the British captain do? He weighed anchor, and steamed straight out to sea, in the very teeth of the storm. Three days later he returned, battered but safe; and there were the other five ships lying piled up, wrecked on the fore shore.

What a parable that is of the Christian church. Whenever it has sought to save its life by hiding in the safe harbor of "orthodoxy" or conventionality it has lost its life. When risking all it has struck out against hostile opposition and pioneered into new fields with new methods of conveying the old message, it has found itself and saved its life. And that has been the virile procedure it has courageously followed whenever it has been caught up in the realization that instead of being a human organization trying to do something for God, it is a spiritual organism thru which God is trying to do something.

When Robert Morrison, the pioneer missionary started for China, someone asked him incredulously whether he really expected to make any impression on that huge country. "No!" he answered. "No! But I expect God will." And thru him and others God has.

Just so power will come to us of the Christian church as we seek to plan and pay for a program that launches straight into the storms of our day. Certainly we shall be defeated if we go out thinking of ourselves merely as representatives of a human organization trying in our feeble way to do something for God. Begging for the church, as we put it. But suppose instead of going out as beggars, we go out as apostles, representatives of a spiritual organism thru which God is trying to save this world. For as apostles offering much instead of beggars asking a little we have very much more to present.

In Lloyd Douglas' book "The Robe," Jonathan, the little seven year old lad has just given away his prize donkey that Marcellus had given him but a few hours before and Marcellus is thinking about it. "This Jesus," he says, "must have been a man of gigantic moral power. He has been dead and in his grave for a year now, but He has stamped Himself so indelibly onto the house of Justus that even this child has been marked! It was as if this Jesus had taken a die and hammer and had pounded the image of His Spirit into this Galilean gold, converting it into the coins of His Kingdom! The man should have lived! He should have been given a chance to impress more people! A Spirit like that if it contrived to get itself going could make the world into a fit habitation for men of goodwill!"

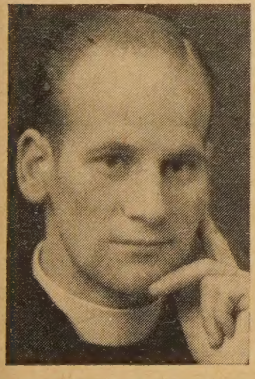
"If it contrived to get itself going!" Well it managed it once 1900 years ago in an upper room; and if it managed it once I strongly suspect it could manage again. Given a few more men and women prepared thru prayer, fortified by a Christ-centered fellowship and motivated to a world-wide mission it might very well contrive to get itself going in this room even in some of us! "O, God, Do It Again!"

The Unbroken Promise

By JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK

It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him to you. John 16:7.

"WE have the word of the King," the Covenanting martyrs shouted in triumph as they stood unfearingly upon the gibbets of the Grassmarket, declaring that the moment after death would find them securely "housed" in the heart of God and at home in his kingdom of light and joy and beauty. "We have the word of the King for it, and of a king better than his word." The passing centuries change neither the word nor the King, and in the matter of this mighty promise, "If I depart, I will send him to you," the disciples discovered that they had the word of the King —the King of kings.



Is it possible for us, with all our efforts of imagination, for poet or painter, peer or peasant, to picture the soul-searching scene, to call up the feelings of the disciples, when Jesus uttered these words to them? The dark betokening of their minds, that he was about to be taken from them, was convincingly confirmed by their Master's simple statement. At first, of course, the full force of the truth of it was veiled from them. For three years, in utter dependence, they had clung to him like little children. He had been the leader of these unsophisticated and untutored men, an unquestioned authority, one who commanded in equal degree their love and their loyalty. Drawn to him by an irresistible charm, yet unable to penetrate either the mystery of his nature, or the far-off meaning of his words, they had as yet no message to deliver to the world, no gospel to preach, no idea of a church. What could possibly keep them banded together? It is impossible to imagine the bewilderment with which they must have looked at one another as Jesus took his leave of them.

AN UNDYING LESSON OF HOPE

We have dwelt on this picture in some detail, because it is the type of so much that has happened since, and of much that is happening now. It contains an undying lesson of hope, and also reveals the unfading glory of an unbroken promise. Never, we are sure, could any loss seem so great, so crushing, so irreparable. And yet out of loss came gain, and because of his absence they found a Presence.

God's promises, like his Son's, are not only for the individual Christian but for the universal church. With him, whom the soul of man seeks after, there is, happily, no respect of persons. And so what he wishes and wills for a single soul becomes an index of his eternal purpose for all his fallen and faltering children. When Adoniram Judson, the Baptist pioneer of missionary enterprise in Burma, was asked what were the prospects of his work, he replied, "As bright as the promises of God."

Something stupendous did take place on the first Whit-Sunday—it is an incontrovertible fact of history —which did transform those disciples into the greatest,

most dynamic, spiritual power that the world has ever seen. That unorganized and unlearned company of men did find in the intangible, inconceivable, unimaginable gift of the Spirit, an impulse, a bond of unity, a power, that not only turned them into indomitable heroes, but founded, promoted, and still inspires the whole church of Christ. What must have seemed to them a wild incredible dream—this promise of the Comforter—has become a solid reality. There is a Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. The Comforter *has* come. Who can deny it? It was expedient for Christ to go away. His departure made it possible for the Spirit, promised by him, to invade our lives and purify and empower us in ways beyond our understanding. We are able to know and think now of God's intimate presence with us and support of us; as a living, acting, Holy Spirit penetrating the whole world and each willing soul in that world.

THE GOD OF YOUR LIFE

"God," wrote William Law, the inspired and thorough-going mystic, "is no otherwise your God than as he is the God of your life, manifested in it; and he can be no otherwise the God of your life but as his Spirit is living in you." Charles Wesley said much the same thing, but in a more poetic manner, when he wrote his hymn, *Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire.*

God is Spirit, and he dwells in the hearts of humble men. Timothy Richard, the renowned and respected missionary-statesman of China, described shortly before his death how he met in Central Shangtung an intelligent Chinese philanthropist, who confessed, quite unashamedly, that he had read the New Testament three times over. "What was it that impressed you most of all in the New Testament?" was the question Richard put to him. The young fellow thought a little while, and then replied: "I think the most marvelous thing that impressed me was this—that it is possible for us men to become temples of the Holy Ghost."

The oriental was right. And the miracle of God's presence within and pressure upon human life is only realisable because Jesus kept the promise he made, on the eve of his departure, to a few forlorn followers.

It is, of course, as difficult for some, as it is easy for others, to think of God in terms of the Holy Spirit.

You may recall the amusing scene in the tavern in *Silas Marner* where the village worthies discuss the credibility of ghosts.

"Ay, but there's this in it, Dowlas," said the landlord, speaking in a tone of much candour and tolerance. "There's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pike-staff before 'em. And there's reason i' that. For there's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself; but then I says to myself, 'Very like I haven't got the smell for 'em.' "

The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier—a man intensely opposed to compromise.

"Tut, tut," he answered, "what's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That's what I should like to know. If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em come where there's company and candles."

"As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!" said Mr. Macey, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena.

There are, to be sure, similar attitudes to God.

THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF MEN

I have been greatly helped in this matter by thinking of the spirit of men and how the spirit of a man may influence his fellows. There was Abraham Lincoln. He was born in a cabin, read by a fireplace, chopped wood, worked in a store, could not bear to take life, would not use a gun, had a gift for telling stories, liked gingerbread, was honest, practiced law, became President, loved people, wanted union in his country, wished and worked for slaves to be freed, dreamed dreams and suffered for them, was shot through the head by John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln was one of the most kind, just, unselfish men America ever knew. Is his spirit there dead? Of course, it isn't. Today it still influences, energizes, and ennobles American life and society. Preachers on both sides of the Atlantic still speak well of him, and poets, too, conscious of an influence that is still active and positive over men, write poems about Lincoln.

Such an analogy, I know, though it seems quite sensible, has many limitations and imperfections. It does not go quite far enough. But without stirring up any unnecessary arguments, it helps us to think of the Holy Spirit as the living God at work in his world. God is alive and active, and the Holy Spirit is his energizing power operating in human life and society. That Spirit guides, comforts, and gives power.

A PROFOUND MYSTERY—BUT A FACT

The Holy Spirit indwelling human life is indeed a profound mystery, but it is a fact. It is the characteristic glory of the Christian dispensation. Our Lord, addressing his disciples at the Last Supper, distinguishes in a single sentence between the work of the Holy Spirit before and after Pentecost: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Once the Holy Spirit pleaded and strove with men from without; now he speaks and wrestles with his people from within. Once his action was like the fitful gusts of a mighty rushing wind; now it is like the steady and increasing breath of a quiet breeze.

It was in the spring-time in Galilee, when the flowers appeared on the earth and the time of the singing of birds had come, that the resurrection of our Lord took place, and it is in the spring that, to nations of the western world, the tidings of the resurrection always come. Just then, when all nature is chanting songs and shouting messages of life resurgent, in the midst of the young leaves, with a carpet of glad

flowers, set in a scene of blossom and startling beauty, is given to us the vision of the risen Christ. Later, when the promise has been fulfilled and spring has become summer, comes the message of the revelation of Pentecost and the power of the Spirit, to rouse those who believe in him to think of the Christ of power, peace, pardon, and prevailing purpose.

PENTECOST IS PROOF OF JESUS' PROMISE

Pentecost is the paramount proof that Jesus will never disappoint or tantalize or betray his struggling sons and daughters. As he is the end of every commandment, so he is the incarnation and final guarantee of every promise he made. And since he is one who keeps troth, we can repose ourselves in his perfect fidelity. He found a way to come to the world in the incarnation, and revealed God to us in human nature. He found a way to come to his crestfallen companions after he rose from the dead, and revealed that the cross was a victory and not a defeat. He has found a way to come to us who need him more than anything or anyone else in our life, a way which is covenanted and sure, though the deep reality of it is a spiritual and interior experience.

There is not a sin on the face of the earth now, or in human life—no matter how dogged and stubborn it may be—which cannot be blotted out, if only the cleansing, conquering Spirit is given his chance. Since the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost the same power may be ours that enabled Jesus to set his face steadfastly, as a flint, to go up to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit who is the interpreter of the word and will of God, who illumines the church with his presence, will, if we allow him, enable us to see the world as the world for which Christ died. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised, is here, and asks possession of your nature and mine with all its possibilities and powers. Only he can fill your life and mine and evoke from it love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith.

At Wit's End

By WILLIAM EARL WALDROP

OF all the words in the languages of man, none can be sharpened to a keener cutting edge than the word, why. We are always using this word as a means of solving the riddle of life. Why must life hurt so? Why does man come face to face with so many problems? Why do people die before their time? Why does God allow a human life to be blighted, maimed, and mangled?

I went to the cemetery not long ago with a mother who had lost two children in less than a year. As we walked away from the open grave she sobbed out from beneath her tears, "Why did two have to be taken from me in so short a time?" So the questions come from all walks of life asking, Why? Why? Why?

The book of Job is one long agonizing "why." Job saw his earthly possessions taken away, why? He saw his family taken by death, why? When ill health took hold of him and laid him low, he realized that he was at the end of human wit. While he was cursing the day he was born, he uttered a sentence that deserves a place among the great sayings of all times, "Why does God give light to man at his wit's end? These words give a name to the most tragic spot on any map, "Wit's End."

At some time in life we all stand at "Wit's End." The person who has not been there yet, no matter how many other places he has been, is a juvenile in experience. This is one of the inevitables of life to imperfect man, and none of us is perfect. We all have fallen far short of the glory of God.

I once talked to a man who was a prisoner of the Japanese on the Island of Luzon in the Philippines. He told a story of the empty and futile feeling that came as one by one his friends were killed, or died or mysteriously disappeared. The question, he said, came, "What can a man do when there is nothing else to do?" He had reached his "Wit's End."

WE ALL COME TO A "WIT'S END"

Here is a man for instance who has lost his health and with it has lost family security. He can see no way clear for the welfare of his family. What can he do? He is at his "Wit's End."

Or here is a woman suffering from cancer. The doctor can do nothing for her. There is no hope of cure. The only sure thing is that she will gradually get worse and worse; weaker and weaker, and finally die. What can she do? She is at her "Wit's End."

Or here is a young man who has allowed some habit to get the best of him. He has gone on and on saying, "I can stop any time I want to." Then one day he finds that he cannot stop. He is a slave to his habit. What can he do? He is at his "Wit's End."

Or here is a man 34 years old in the army in New Guinea. He has a wife and 14 year old son back in Wyoming. When he left them all was well. After having been away from them for eight months a letter comes one day from his wife saying she has fallen in love with some one else and wants a divorce from him so she can marry this other man. What could he do? He stood at his "Wit's End."

As I stood on the deck of a troop transport that was steaming away from San Francisco to I knew not where; as I realized that I was leaving behind all that I loved, perhaps never to return; as the Golden Gate Bridge became dimmer and dimmer to view, it seemed to me that I too had reached my "Wit's End."

Add your own dilemma to these and you will see what I mean when I say that sooner or later we all stand at the threshold of our "Wit's End."

WHAT BRINGS INDIVIDUALS TO "WIT'S END"?

Is it, as so many say, God's will that we come to the end of our rope? I do not believe it. We blame God too often for things he did not do. A young man was killed in the war on the same day he got word that his son was born. Looking up into the face of his chaplain he coughed out these dying words: "Isn't this just like God?" He blamed God for his terrible death. But I cannot believe that God is responsible for bringing men disaster and trouble.

Often circumstances over which we have no control bring man to his "Wit's End." A recent book by Betsey Barton, a woman 26 years old tells how ten years ago she was in an automobile accident that fractured her spine. Ever since she has been unable to walk. She is paralyzed from her hips down. She calls her book, "And Now To Live Again." It is the story of one who has been at her "Wit's End," because of unavoidable circumstances, and yet has come to the conclusion that no one is to blame for her terrible condition.

More often, however, we come to "Wit's End" because of our own stupidity. A few years ago we had a man in our church who was respected. He held a Ph.D. degree from the university. He became president of a college. He reached the top in his profession. But, he began playing with drink. It wasn't long before he lost his position. A little more time elapsed and he was a drunken bum, begging on the streets. Finally he had reached his "Wit's End." He was there because of his own stupidity.

Several years ago I knew a man who was worth a small fortune. Instead of being satisfied with what he had he lusted for more. He began to search around for ways to invest his money that would bring him greater dividends. He invested wrongly and lost his fortune in one swoop. He became despondent. He was ready to take his own life. He was at his "Wit's End." He was there because of his own gluttony.

Circumstances and our own stupidity bring us to our "Wit's End" but God never does.

Time after time man comes to the end of his tether and cries out, "Now what can I do?" There is only one answer to the question. Man has through the ages given many different answers but there is only one true way: that is, to turn to God. For God gives light to a man at his Wit's end.

It was at "Wit's End" that Job found something better than human wit. He found God. It has been true historically that at the point where the resources of human wit have come to an end, multitudes of men have found God. So true, that the ancient adage has become a household phrase, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Dr. Halford E. Luccock has said, "The entrance into the riches of God has been through the bankruptcy court of human devices." That is not theory, it is a fact—multiplied a million times in human experience.

This does not mean that God comes into life only when it crashes. It is not only, "When other helpers fail and comforts flee," that man finds God. Men have met him in unlikely places. But a frequent place of meeting has been that lonesomest spot in the world "Wit's End." At the end of the human tether, thoughts that are higher than man's thoughts are discerned.

Why can God be so good as to give light to us when we recklessly flee from his presence? We do not know. We only know that he is good. That is all we need to know, that God is good. That he does come to us when we are willing to realize that human devices are not enough.

Running like an unbroken chain throughout the Bible are the precious promises of God that he will not forsake us at "Wit's End." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send my comforter unto you."

WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL REACHES "WIT'S END"

Betsey Barton tells us in her book, "And Now To Live Again," that life began anew for her when she reached out and grasped the hand of God.

The man who was prisoner of the Japanese found comfort in the midst of hell itself, when he realized that the only thing remaining for him was God.

The drunkard cured his malady when he allowed God to lift him up above the common-place.

The man who lost his fortune and was ready to take his own life, found hope for the future in God.

One of the greatest lessons that life has to teach us, is that man is not sufficient unto himself. We reach into the heart of life's meaning when we come to the conclusion that, man minus God equals misery; man minus God equals loneliness; man minus God equals desperation: but, man plus God equals victory, even at "Wit's End."

As we meet the cruelties of life, let us meet them as Henry Lyte, a great English clergyman did. He was in bed for years with tuberculosis. There was no cure for him. One morning in 1847 a member of the family climbed the stairs to his room to see what he would have to eat, only to find his lifeless form lying on the bed; his face turned toward the eastern window; toward the sunrise. A pencil and paper lay beside him on the bed. On the paper he had written these words:

Abide with me, fast falls the even-tide
The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;

Change and decay in all around I see,
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

When we can face life at its worst and do the best things; when we can constantly abide with God and he with us, no matter what our circumstances: when we can admit to ourselves that human wit is not enough, we have learned the secret of finding light from God at "Wit's End."

United I Stand

By WILLIAM BLAKE

This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13, 14.

DESCRIBING the principal character in a modern novel its author said, "He was not so much a human being as a civil war."

Glenway Wescott, in "The Grandmothers," lifts the curtain on the inner life of Alwyn Tower in recording the young man's thoughts as he sits by the bedside waiting for his grandmother Tower to die:

"He knew . . . that he would unite in himself two races of men, the characteristics of two men: his grandfather Tower the aristocrat, painstakingly upright about a few unprofitable actions controlled by conscience, never changing his faithful and secretive mind; his grandfather Duff, a sort of Proteus, a hypocrite, a liar or rhetorician, profiting by everything. He would have to make some sort of peace between the fruitless pride of the one and the creative vanity of the other. There would also have to be a compromise between his talent for poverty and his love of wealth."

A SOURCE OF FAILURE

Here is an important source of unhappiness and failure: the presence within the individual, not of a single person, but of several. That is to say there are desires, hungers, ideals, affections within which clash with one another, which fight among themselves for supremacy, and now one and now another guides and determines the outward attitudes and actions. Such inner conflict is a common cause of failure; for it saps one's strength, uses it up internally, and prevents the satisfactory meeting of life's real problems. In these strenuous days a person needs all his resources with which to meet the demands put upon him by outward circumstances; and when, through internal dissension, conflicting interests, desires and purposes, it is denied him, failure in some form or another is inevitable. Dissatisfaction and despair are sure to follow.

Jesus was describing just such a personal situation when He said, "And if a kingdom be divided against itself that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end." (Mark 3:24-26) The principle Jesus applied to Satan applies with equal force to any personality. Inner division insures failure.

CONFLICTING INTERESTS

There was a family under my pastoral care at one time which literally and completely went to pieces because its members could not reconcile the conflicting forces within themselves. Both parents had been school teachers, and were well educated and charming. The wife had a brilliant mind and considerable talent; the husband was of good average intelligence. There were two daughters. Trained as a school teacher, the father was working as a travelling salesman. The wife could not stand to have her husband make a success as a teacher because she, too, was a teacher, and it hurt her professional pride to have his success talked about. She actually went to members of the Board of Education with information which led to their refusal to renew his contract. When, however, he was not successful in the field of merchandising, she fretted and was unhappy over his failure, and constantly reminded him of his inferiority. Next she secured a good position in the bookkeeping department of a large firm and again became unhappy because she, instead of her husband, was earning the major portion of the family support. She couldn't bear to see him succeed, because she felt it reflected on her superior ability; and she couldn't bear to see him fail, because that reflected on the standing of the family in the community.

But he, too, had his conflicts, some of them caused no doubt by hers. He could never decide what line of work he wanted permanently to engage in. Sometimes he wanted to teach, at other times he wanted to be a successful salesman, and again he felt that he would like to study Swedish massage and set up in business as a masseur. Today the family is completely divided, the children deprived of what might have

been a happy, creative and wholesome home life, their parents estranged and divorced, each one of them going on from one experience of frustration and failure to another.

I know a Christian minister, possessed of at least average talents, who has never been able to hold a church for any length of time, and all for the same reason. Competing with his desire to serve as a minister of the church were other desires and ambitions. He wanted the money the ministry does not bring, and so he tried to live as though he had it, anyway. He craved recognition he did not get in his work, and so he ran for public office. So it went on, while his churches suffered, his hunger for success never found satisfaction, his pride was bruised and battered, and finally he left the parish ministry.

The personality divided against itself, composed of warring desires and conflicting forces, wastes its energy in fruitless internal conflict, scatters the forces it does use aimlessly, and gathers to itself cumulative deposits of bitterness.

CLASSES OF INTERNAL CONFLICT

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in *On Being a Real Person,* lists three classes of such internal conflict. First, our ambitions and desires clash among themselves. We want to go north and south at the same time. A woman longs for a career, and home and babies simultaneously. A student wants high marks in school, and the leisure and ease of getting along without hard work. A man wants his family well cared for, and yet at the same time wants to indulge in sports and other activities that cost far more than can be spared if the needs of the family are to be met.

The second class of conflicts arises from the powerful human urges such as sex, pugnacity and selfishness in collision with the restraints of society and conscience. Our age has witnessed the progressive breaking down of many of the older conventions, and the rather free expression of some of these urges; yet the voice of conscience cannot be stilled, and successfully opposes the individual in the exercise of his asserted freedom. The result is that the conflicts, instead of being eliminated, are aggravated.

The third class arises from the disproportion between the personal ambition of the individual and his own capacities. We all tend to aim high in our desires for success, and yet each of us is strictly limited in talents. Hence when we do not reach the heights there is bound to be a conflict between the unsatisfied ambitions and the reality. The student whose best efforts fail to win him a place on the honor roll, the worker whose longed-for promotions never materialize, the minister whose appointments are always disappointments all know from bitter experience what conflicts these unrealized ambitions can beget.

A BALANCE IS POSSIBLE

But there are people who, in common with all of us, share these conflicts, yet seem somehow to achieve a balance among the competing inner forces, or better still a subordination and coordination within which enables them to tackle life with all their energies and talents working at the real task of living. Life is organized, for them, around a common center; and in that center a re-direction of life-forces takes place. The psychologists have a long word for it, "integration" which is another way of saying "making whole," or "making unified."

In *The Art of Living,* Dr. Norman Vincent Peale tells of how such a process came to a rather lazy, easy-going student friend. He was tops on the athletic field, but just as unsuccessful in the classroom as he was brilliant in sport. The football season neared its close and it was whispered around the corridors that once it was over the curtain was to fall upon his academic career. Then one day in a psychology class the instructor described how the average person fails because his powers are wasted in conflict or purposeless activity, using the illustration of the sunglass. The rays of the sun falling on a paper have but little effect, but caught up, focussed and concentrated by the use of a sunglass they quickly set it on fire. Success, the psychology teacher pointed out, came to the man who could draw together and consolidate his inner resources in a single great purpose. Like a flash this truth drove home to the student, and aloud in class he said, "I see it! I see it!" Of course there were titters as he settled back in his seat, but he was happy. He had discovered a secret. It changed him from failure to success, scholastically; for rumor was foiled, and the student stayed on to achieve a success which had seemed impossible. He found a purpose, and his personality was brought to a focus around it.

A DOMINATING PASSION WILL INTEGRATE

While any purpose, if it becomes dominating and ruling, a true master-passion, will serve to integrate, to make unified and whole the personality of the individual who holds it, life may be unified on either a high or a low level. Adolf Hitler was a personality organized around a ruling passion, and it is that integration which accounts for much of his power. However, it was integrated upon such a low level that its dangerous power destroyed the peace and security of the whole world.

For Christians that same office can be performed by taking our religion seriously, so seriously that the ruling passion of our lives, the organizing force, becomes the program and character of Jesus Christ. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (clothing, shelter, food, and the good things of life) shall be added unto you." Paul took that seriously. He described the process in his letter to the Philippians: "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Seach through history and you will find no person with a personality more integrated and unified than that of Paul, save only the Master Himself. So completely were all his inner resources and forces working in harmony that nothing, literally nothing, could seri-

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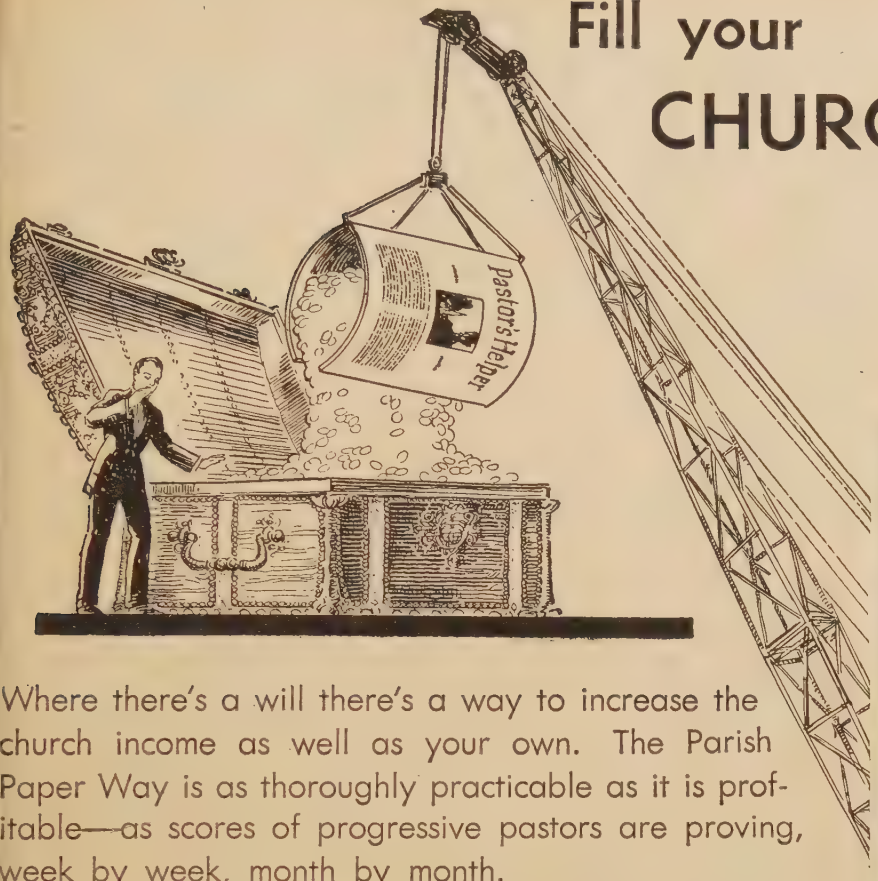

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ously threaten his successful meeting of any situation. Shipwreck? An unruly mob? Hunger? Prison? No matter! Paul was ready for anything. Disaster could not defeat him. He was often down but never out.

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Unpublished Sermons

THE recent war, with its havoc and blight, has brought to the minds of many the fact that the way out from war and hate is the church. Stories have been told of soldiers and fliers coming to a realization that after all churches are excellent guideposts. In what respects is the Church needed by men and nations today?

The Church Today

CHARLES M. CROWE, minister of the Methodist Church in Wilmette, Ill., preached a sermon on "The Indispensable Church" which leaves no doubt as to the place this first of all institutions must have today if the world is to be saved—and if the church is to survive.

First, the church is indispensable for modern society. After all, the church is not dead nor dying. The *Ladies Home Journal* found in a nation-wide census that 76 per cent of Americans are members of some church; also that 95 per cent believe in God, and that 90 per cent pray. It is a cheering fact, too, that "there is a widespread conviction that religion is somehow basic to peace and social stability." Scientists, economists, sociologists, educators, jurists have joined in saying that there is no cure for mounting crime, disrespect for law and divorce except in moral and religious teachings. "Now, here is the major issue of our day: How is this vast religious interest to be brought to focus in meeting our terrifying problems? There is one answer: through the church of Jesus Christ."

Some superior people look at the church with scorn. But they "know nothing about the church except from superficial inspection and hearsay; or they judge the church of today by that of their childhood; or they are rationalizing to meet God's challenge to their personal lives." They must see the church as it is—of infinite power and possibilities.

Second, the church is indispensable for modern man. The upsurge of lectures on psychology, psychiatry and "ways to happiness" indicates the restlessness of moderns. People are bored with life and are reaching for something better. "But we cannot save ourselves by our fancy gadgeteering. Adequacy for life and satisfying living come to fruition only as the spirit of Jesus Christ becomes functional at the center of personality."

"Modern man is too often lighted only from below, with cheap neons of sordid literature, selfish indulgences, inane movies, idle talk, false goals. Whence shall he recover the radiance of personality which is his birthright save in the luminous worship of God?" And right there is where the church fits in.

Third, the indispensable church deserves our finest loyalties. Henry Luce of *Life* magazine stated that the only money which has a chance to turn the tide in the world's life is money given to the church. It is a sad fact that whereas per capita income is highest in history, per capita giving is lowest. Government figures for 1948 showed that Americans spent in 1947: 30 per cent for food, 12 per cent for clothing, 9 per cent for strong drink and tobacco—and one-half of one per cent for the church! "The church has too long been a mendicant before men with its tin cup for paltry gratuities. Too long has the church humored the whimsy of men in seeking financial support." This is the Christian principle: All we have belongs to God and we but hold it in trust for him. "The giving Christian is the happy Christian. A great church is always a giving church."

"The church of God needs every resource at its command. With Christ our leader, we face forward and we cannot fail."

This page of the Pulpit is devoted to the review of some of the many fine sermons submitted for publication in the Pulpit which cannot be printed in full for lack of space. They are presented here in extract form in the hope that the fine material they contain will serve as inspiration for Pulpit readers.

The Problem of Suffering

G. W. M. Laurence was formerly vicar of two parishes in East London, Eng. One of his churches was blitzed during the war and the strain of carrying on resulted in a complete breakdown. He is now retired. Mr. Laurence knows his subject as he writes on the theme, "Pain and Suffering." His text is Col. 1:23-24: "I, Paul . . . who now rejoice in my sufferings." Was Paul mad, he asks, or had he probed far deeper into the mystery of suffering than most of us?

In his discussion of his subject, Mr. Laurence progresses by asking, and attempting to answer, a series of questions. Is pain useless? If one suffers, say, from angina (this minister's affliction), that is a sign that there is something wrong and that a physician should be consulted. Thus, pain can scarcely be called useless. "If I am a believer in the wisdom of the Creator, I doubt whether I ought to consider anything he has made can be wasteful."

Did God create suffering? Why does this idea persist, that God sends illness as a punishment? Because of such passages in the Old Testament as "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." But God's chastisement, apart from sickness brought on by willful sin, rests within the spirit of man and not in his body. "If that is so, it is reasonable to say that God, far from causing pain, provides a remedy for it, and such a belief is consistent with Jesus' teaching that God is love."

Has God a remedy? Not drugs; they do not cure suffering, but only deaden the mental powers. In the journeyings of the Israelites through the wilderness there are two parables of the crucifixion, the Brazen Serpent and the Bough which sweetened the waters. "Combining these ideas we come to the proved remedy for suffering: look on the cross and in its light compare our sufferings

with Christ's. Could any pain equal that of crucifixion?"

But the force of the argument is in Mr. Laurence's testimony from his own experience. "I said that here we have a proved remedy, and I meant it. When the late Bishop King of Lincoln, Eng., lay wracked with pain, he used to whisper to himself, 'Jesus took a Body.' Two years ago, when a severe attack of angina compelled me to retire from the ministry, I tried the same thing. My affliction was practically lost in the contemplation of the cross. I can truthfully say that in my case suffering not only became tolerable, but with that treatment I became mentally and spiritually a new man. In my compelled period of rest I learned more than in twenty-seven years in the active ministry."

But why rejoice? How could Paul "rejoice in suffering"? He tells us that he is "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his own flesh." What could he have meant?

"I give you an explanation for what it may be worth. If in this life there is such a thing as quantitative suffering,

Pastoral Prayer

By WARE W. WIMBERLY

WE PRAISE THEE, O God, for the privilege of prayer: that prayer is the way to Thy Presence, that Thou art able to hear not only what our lips say, but also the unvoiced pleadings of our hearts, the longings which words cannot express, the desires which are known but to us and Thee; that Thou hast told us to be bold in prayer, to be sincere in our speech, and to believe that Thou wilt never fail to hear us.

And in that spirit would we come. Forgive us our unworthiness. Forgive us all that would make us reluctant to approach Thee. Grant us now the assurance that all who truly repent and seek Thy forgiveness, truly have it, and that with pure hands and a clean heart we may look to Thee.

Remember our loved ones. Heal the sick; comfort the dying; let the friendless know that Thou art their friends. Bless the stranger among us; bless our enemies and break down the walls of hatred and suspicions and ignorance that divide us. Grant unto the leaders of Thy people wisdom, in church and in state.

Hear the prayers of Thy people for an enduring peace. So guide us, so keep with us, so walk beside us, so impress upon our hearts the lessons of the years, that we shall pursue with one heart and mind the things that make for peace. Deliver us, O God, from national selfishness. Teach the nations to be friends with one another.

And keep Thy word going out over the world. Fill Thy house with true worshipers. Impress upon Thy children their need of Thee and their need of the church. And speak to us, we pray Thee, of these needs in this holy hour, through hymns, through prayers, through the offering of gifts and the hearing of Thy Word. Then send us on our homeward way, more devoted servants of Thine, braver witnesses to him, in whose name and for whose sake we make all our prayers, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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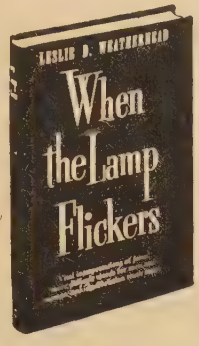

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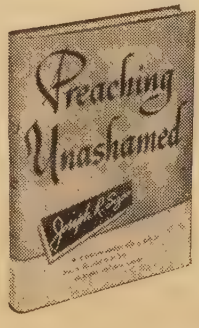

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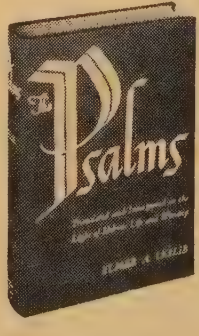

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then it is not equally shared out; if it were, the proportion of physical sufferers would be relatively high. But if, as Simon helped to bear Christ's cross, some of us are privileged to bear more than our share of pain—then who would deny us the satisfaction which that brings?"

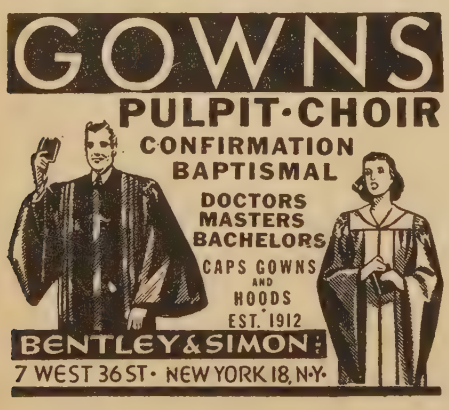
Bringing his argument down to the common experience of ministers, Mr. Laurence comments that they who come into close touch with sickness know that often it is the saintliest of people who bear the most. "On the face of it this seems unreasonable, but if my interpretation of St. Paul's words is correct, then vicarious suffering is a filling up of the afflictions of Christ, and he will give us strength to overcome our weakness."

"That rude, hastily arranged cross is then definitely the Bough sweetening the waters of our bitterness."

Challenge to Youth

Standing in the pulpit at First Congregational Church, Madison, Wis.—the seat of that state's great university—Alfred W. Swan knows a good deal about youth and young people, as a problem and as a possibility. At a conference for High School youth held this spring he gave a message on "Christ's Call to Youth" which was not a dry-as-dust sermon but an intimate talk such as all could understand. Taking as his text Mark 10:21, "And Jesus looking upon him loved him," the minister told of that most attractive young man. "He had everything. But he wasn't ready to give everything. Here was one whom Christ especially loved for what he was; and he could not give himself to the Master, because of what he had."

First, consider the advantage of youth. "You have everything." A young man has an athletic body, a fine face, good clothes, brains, personality-plus. A young woman has a fair face, attractive hair, lovely clothes, intellect. They have everything. "Everything lies before youth. It has time *yet,* which age does not have. But the big questions are still not life-decided." What of the future?



Second, consider the peril of youth—that it has everything. "This generation of youth enjoys the possession of a great many things which it never helped earn, and whose real value in terms of cost and meaning it does not realize." The town in which one lives, its streets, its fine stores were earned by someone else. One's education seems to come easily, but somebody was responsible for the schools, books, teachings. Youth takes for granted freedom and civilization; it forgets that these were bought at a tremendous price.

The peril of youth is not that it has everything, but that it has everything handed to it.

Third, what then is the responsibility of youth? "Have you got what it takes?" Discipline, honesty, courage, courtesy, compassion. "All these values have been built up for you by the Christs who have gone before you. What have you to give to the Christ?" There is a student movement known as Christian Horizons Limited. It lists 2,500 openings for men and women in missionary service in 70 countries. "Horizons Unlimited lie before you. What are you going to do about it?"

It costs to be a Christian. An old teacher lay dying. He had taught all his years in a school in India, in the name of Christ his King. His friend heard him whisper, "I see his Kingdom coming." To which his young friend said, "I would give everything in the world for a faith like that." "That's what it cost me," said the old man simply.

"You have everything, which is the reason you must give everything. In this case, it's a bargain at the price."

Paul on Evangelism

A solid basis for Christian evangelism is found by Roland E. Turnbull, minister of First Baptist Church, Alton, Ill., in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. His theme is "The Biblical Basis of Evangelism." In this letter he finds three great principles stated and discussed.

First, the nature and manifestation of God. For an effective evangelism we must capture the sense of the majestic transcendence of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Some aspects of God's nature fruitful for evangelism are: He is ethical; and Paul in Romans challenges pagan idolatry and immorality. He is not only transcendent, but also imminent. He has come close to men's hearts. "Immanuel"—God with us.

Second, the definition and results of sin. Not sins—murder, adultery and the like—but *sin.* And what is sin? Essentially, rebellion against God. It may surprise, but sin is not necessarily seen in evil deeds. For sin is "to fail to meet God's standard." An effective evangelism must display God's yardstick before self-satisfied man. That yardstick is Jesus Christ.

The results of sin are twofold: As seen in the fearful catalogue of Paul's Epistle—"men . . . filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness," ad nauseam. Also as seen in man's failure to enjoy the spiritual pleasures God intends us to have and which are inhibited by sin. Those spiritual pleasures Christ brings. "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Third, the means and method of salvation. To many the word means little, because it is worn and frayed. A new definition of salvation: "Adjustment." Sin is maladjustment, salvation is adjustment. But man cannot "adjust" himself. He needs a Savior. Christ's death on the cross reveals the final infamy of sin and the utmost reach of the grace of God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

As to method of operation: "As sin is revealed in man's transference of faith in God to faith in himself, so salvation is experienced when man transfers faith in himself back to faith in God. This takes humility which is the opposite of pride from which sin springs." Thus a man is "adjusted" toward God.

"Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be."

But all this consideration of sin and salvation is not an emotionless lesson in logic. "These great doctrines are bathed in emotion." Paul is really looking with brimming heart at the ever-flowing grace of God, and his great emotion is represented by his words: "He loved me and gave himself for me."

Which Was Wiser?

A Story for Children by Stanley A. Hunter

THE *Drum Call* from Elat, West Africa, is one of the most interesting mission papers which I receive. It is printed on the mission press by schoolboys who know the strange secrets of the jungle.

I was interested in the account in one issue of this paper of the strange souvenirs brought back from Europe by African soldiers. "Everything from guitars to fancy lamps" caught the fancy of these men. One lugged a large bronze statue all the way from Italy—just a little remembrance from Florence. I imagine that when he first saw this statue which had probably decorated the garden of some wealthy Italian he thought it would not be greatly missed, for it was lying in the ruins caused by a shell.

"Everybody will envy me this beautiful statue when I set it up in front of my thatched house in my little garden," he said to himself. "It will be worth all the trouble I will have in getting it back to my barracks and at last on the ship that sails home."

THE VALUE OF SEEDS

But there was another soldier whose old father had been a gardener for a white man. He knew the value of seeds. So when he ate some new fruit that he liked, he would save the seeds, even though the other soldiers laughed at him for it. He would get down on his hands and knees and pick up the seeds from the stalks of flowers and from plants in gardens that he passed. He was always on the lookout for new seeds, which he carefully put away in envelopes and folds of paper.

You can imagine how eagerly he looked forward to his return, and how carefully he planted his treasure, when he at last saw his native soil.

Things grow quickly in the warm Africa sunshine, and soon he had a wonderful garden, with vegetables and fruits and flowers no villager had ever seen before. The best thing about it all was that he had seeds left to give others.

Which "souvenir" do you boys and girls think was the better? Which soldier was really happier?

CHANGE is one of the most perilous things in the world. There is only one thing I can think of more dangerous—not to change. The Eternal has put us in a world where stagnation is a deadly sin.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

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Christian Cooperation at the Grass Roots

By WALTER R. WARNER

SOMEONE has well put the contest that is now on between cooperation and sectarianism in the church as a race between Amsterdam and Middletown. Rather than a race between the two, however, I should like to think of it as a task of bringing the good news, not from Ghent to Aix, but from Amsterdam to Middletown. Because the news is so good, and because so many an Aix, or cross-roads community, has not even heard of Amsterdam, the carrying of the news demands speed.

● *Good News for Middletown*

We need a good sturdy Roland for our steed, one that will get all the way to the farthest out-post with the message, and not with a "horrible heave of the flank", sink down on its knees, or roll over "dead as a stone" just when Aix is in sight. This is written with the conviction that we have our mount all saddled, bridled, and waiting for us in the form of local councils of churches. We have such councils in all the larger cities of America, but now is the time to proceed to organize them, or at least their equivalent, in every town, hamlet and village across the country.

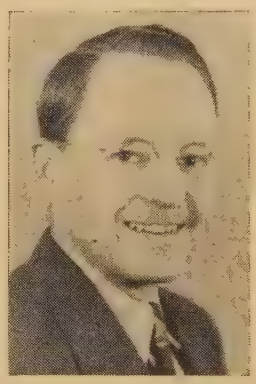
The formation of local councils of churches may not seem like a very mighty thing to do—only adding organizations in an already over-organized America—just arranging for mass committee meetings to attend, when one would rather preach the glories of the great world church from a house top.

Many a town or village already has a ministers' association through which a number of fine cooperative affairs are conducted each year, but a council of churches could do all these things, and more, and do them better. Furthermore, a council could put the laymen to work—training them in cooperation and putting them in direct communication with Amsterdam, and other such long distance points.

● *Keeping the Layman in Touch*

It is the laymen and not just the ministers who need this. The talk that goes on at these world conferences needs to reach the ears of the average layman. If this average layman has had his receiver down all along on these discussions of "Life and Work", "Faith and Order", "Man's Disorder and God's Design" —maybe he will not go as "sky high", as Stanley High predicts, over the pronouncements that seem so obvious to those accustomed to listening in on the ecumenical party line. The scandalous news about the leftward trend in the thinking of the church has gone around the neighborhood so long now that it has ceased to shock anyone except the latest of listeners.

This is written, not from years of successful experience with councils of churches in various parts of the United States, but from a rather recent discovery of the value of this kind of organization in a village of around fifteen hundred inhabitants in which I spent my last pastorate in



WALTER R. WARNER

Pennsylvania. From my experiences in town and country parishes in Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Oregon I now can see possibilities for a council in each of these places where I have been.

The first step, of course, is to get in touch with the executive secretary of the state council of churches, or to write to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. They will furnish model constitutions and guidance and help in getting the new organization under way.

One of the most important committees of those suggested in any model constitution will be the committee on interchurch activities with sub-committees on men's work, women's work, and youth work. Each of these sub-committees can sponsor three or four special events during the year and perhaps some continuous activities. On these committees should be the leaders in laymen's, women's, and young people's work in the local churches. It takes only a little knowledge of lay activities, women's societies, and youth programs, and a little imagination of one's own to visualize the many possibilities in cooperative projects sponsored by such committees.

● *Women's Work Is Set Up*

The women's committees have their work all outlined for them by the United Council of Church Women, and how important it is that the women in these small towns of America know and join in the work of the United Council! In their World Day of Prayer, May Fellowship, and World Community Day, they have three programs that can easily be carried out in any community, and their projects for relief need the support of more women. It is needless to emphasize the benefits that would come to many a small town "Ladies' Aid" in coming in touch with the United Council of Church Women.

There will, of course, be a committee on Christian education, with sub-committees on leadership training and, perhaps, both the vacation church school and week-day education. What is possible for the churches to do together in this field would be determined by local needs and circumstances. Certainly most communities can with advantage hold their leadership training school together. Once a year some outstanding religious leader can be brought to even a small community, if all the churches combine their resources and share their available leaders with the other churches. When there is a local council of churches, for example, a children's worker from some denominational board can be advertised as coming from Chicago, Nashville, or Indianapolis and the parents and teachers of children from all of the local churches will come out to hear her speak or lead a work shop discussion. This they might not do as well should she be sponsored by only one of the various churches of the town. Communities with a cooperative vacation church school and without local councils of churches often have the school in charge of an uninformed, self-perpetuating board of laymen, or the entire responsibility falls upon the ministers. A council can bring in resources from the outside,

state council aid, or help from denominational educational agencies, that can improve schools which have been long running in the same old "rut." If a community is planning week-day instruction in religion, it most certainly will need a council to conduct the classes and to represent the churches to the parents and the public schools.

● *Cooperation Helpful in Evangelism*

The committee on evangelism will have much to do—especially if local conditions permit wide areas of cooperation. If union evening services are possible or are already in progress, this will be a major responsibility for them—to make this evening service something more than a conclave of "the faithful few"—something more representative of the religious interests of the entire community. The best in religious motion pictures, choir festivals, pageants, religious drama, dramatic services of worship, the best in outside speakers, and forums or panel discussions on themes of current interest are only a few of the many variations that a committee with imagination can attempt.

Observance of the Universal Week of Prayer can be another responsibility of this committee. Let the week be given to prayer, rather than to sermons by the local ministers about prayer. Cottage prayer meetings scheduled all over town for several nights of the week in which the people of all the churches mingle and pray together, following the devotional guide furnished by the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America will convince the community that the Christian people believe in prayer and can worship together. Some communities can hold union visitation or public evangelism campaigns, perhaps the two combined, or yet the new, so-called, Christian Teaching Mission. Such demonstrations of Christian unity help fulfill the Master's prayer, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me". One minister, recently in my hearing, when we were talking about the possibility of a council of churches for this place, gave a new application of the story of Jesus healing the paralytic. He supposed that the four men bringing their sick friend came to a cross road somewhere on their way to Capernaum and each wanted to go to the Master by a different road. These four men might take their separate ways and all arrive at the place where Jesus was without too much delay or difficulty, but in so doing, they would arrive without bringing their sick brother with them. In how many small communities the churches are so ineffective in bringing the spiritually sick to the Christ simply because they are so divided in their efforts!

● *A Committee on Social Action*

There should be a committee on social action. It is easiest to get such a committee started on its work if there is some clear issue, and one not too controversial, in the community on which they can begin. How much more effective is a visit to the city council of a group of laymen, rather than a group of ministers! What can be done by this committee in the way of conducting forums on public questions, of sending resolutions on vital current issues, or taking part in any forthright social action will vary greatly from community to community. Ideally such a committee would be in touch with the social action groups of the denominations concerned and thus led along to advanced positions on social questions. Once a year, perhaps near Rural Life Sunday, they could sponsor a rural life institute, or a conference on land tenure such as is now being recommended by the departments of the rural church or the town and country church commissions of all major denominations.

I am aware that there are obstacles to all this, sometimes severe obstacles. In some communities there is deep prejudice against the Federal Council of Churches and even the state council. Some evangelist or reactionary brother not too far away is sure to be spreading misinformation against these organizations. Most pastors will be too busy with their own programs and the promotion of their positive interests to bother answering the charges made against our ecumenical organizations. At the annual meeting of your local council of churches is the time to have a speaker, who has, himself, been at Amsterdam, or who represents or knows the federal or the state council, and who will take some time to "show up" these spreaders of dissension. The laymen will enjoy this and will be glad to be armed with the facts about cooperative and "uncooperative" Christianity. Given half a chance laymen get enthusiastic about denominations working together.

● *The Problem of Finances*

Finances will not be a problem for local councils, if they conduct union evening services, a union Thanksgiving and union Holy Week services, and offerings from these go into the council treasury. This can be used for outside speakers, membership of the local churches in the state and federal council, subscriptions to the Council Bulletin, Information Service, and the International Journal of Religious Education for the local churches, and money can be raised for a goat or heifer for relief or other splendid projects of Church World Service.

As far as I know the council of churches idea is pretty closely confined to cities. An article appeared in The Christian Century some time ago about a successful council which operated in a town of a little less than the required population to be classified as urban. However, as far as my knowledge goes as a resident of four different states, we operated the only council of churches in a town as small as fifteen hundred inhabitants. How many towns of this size or even of two thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand have even thought of trying such a thing? To their surprise they would find that it works. In this place of two thousand we have already had the executive secretary of the Oregon council pay us two visits and have had the organizational meeting and election of the new officers of a county council of churches. Now is the time to get our ecumenical movement moving among the average men and women of our average communities of America. Let's bring Amsterdam from far-away Holland to every hollow and cross-road, where there are two or more churches that can get together on two or more of these projects—let's get cooperation to the very grass roots.

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Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

Factions Make Fractions

THE witness of the Christian churches is today a divided, denominational, and hence, weak witness. The factions within our fellowship have made a feeble fraction of our total impact when it ought to be a substantial unit. We have made Christ the numerator and the 300 or more denominations and sects the denominator, with the net result of 1 over 300. A rather ineffectual force! The apostle Paul utters a vigorous protest against this even as he did with reference to the Corinthians: "Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, drop these party cries. Has Christ been parceled out?" It was our Lord's concern that his followers should all be as one and present a united and powerful witness before the world.

This can be achieved only as we stress our essential unity in Christ and work together in proclaiming our common and universal Christ of the Gospels to a world doomed without him. We must make Christ the common denominator and our denominations and sects the numerator. The total effect would then be 300 over 1, a truly magnificent unit of strength! That would be putting some realism into the hymn we so glibly sing: "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord."—*C. W. Vandenbergh, First Baptist Church, Cortland, N. Y.*

Watch Out for Ruts

ONE of the leading university presidents of the country reported that he was in northern Canada when the frost was breaking up and the roads were largely impassable. At one crossroads he saw this sign: "Take care which rut you choose; you will be in it for the next twenty-five miles." Telling this story, Dr. Fosdick comments: "How one would like to say that to youth! Living ignobly with oneself is an easy thing to start."

Under Twenty

IT IS a well-known fact that there is ten times as great a likelihood of a young man or young woman yielding to the claims of Christ under twenty years of age as there is when they are older. Youth is the time for taking new steps, the time of adventure, the time for growth, the time when foundations are laid and habits are formed. And yet is not youth today largely wasting its energies and opportunities? The spirit of adventure is too often spent in seeking thrills in illegitimate and dangerous paths.

And yet, humanly speaking, youth is the hope of the world. The young people of today must be the parents, the teachers and preachers, the scientists and artists, the authors and leaders of tomorrow. If the youth of today are not won to Christ, what will become of the church, the school, the home, missionary work, and still more important—what will become of the youth as they pass through this life into the eternity beyond?—*Missionary Review.*

Greatest Mission Field

AS DR. JOHN R. MOTT has observed, the college and the university are "the greatest mission field in the world." The "greatest" mission field, not because students are less Christian than others, but because they present the highest potentiality for Christian service and influence. Fully one per cent of the American population live on the campuses of the country, and these young people are at the stage when life decisions are being made. As go the students of today, so goes the nation of tomorrow.

The campus has been the birthplace of religious revival in many generations. John Calvin at Paris, John Wyclif at Oxford, John Hus at Prague, the Wesleys at Oxford, Samuel J. Mills and the Haystack Group at Williams, Henry Drummond among a host of American students, and many other names in God's Kingdom, testify to this fact. As John Witherspoon, once president of Yale, said: "Every gownsman is a potential legion for God."—*Federal Council Bulletin.*

Kitchen Gods

THE Chinese have many gods, but there is one which they call the kitchen god who is in the form of a little paper image. Each home has this god on a shelf throughout the year. At a certain time he is burned so that he can go to heaven and report the sins of the people of the household. Being in the kitchen where he can observe and hear all that goes on, this god evidently doesn't miss very much. Now the Chinese are practical and prudent people, and when the time comes to burn this god many of them smear honey on his mouth!

The Pharisee who prayed in public evidently was trying to do the same sort of thing. But a genuine Christian does not seek to hide his sin from God. On the contrary, in penitence and humility he makes full confession knowing that the Heavenly Father will bring healing and new hope. A "honeyed" confession nullifies such possibility.—*Alfred L. Creager, Trinity Church, Collegeville, Pa.*

'Waiting for Us'

THE late Dr. Francis G. Peabody had an opportunity at Harvard to witness the development of youth, and sometimes to lament the failure of young men and women to meet the challenge of the possibilities awaiting them in the world. He had this to say of these possibilities: "Some of you remember, at the 250th anniversary of Harvard, how the students marched in a great torchlight procession, with many original and amusing transparencies and banners, and how the Freshman class, then only a month old as students, carried at their head this motto: 'The University has been waiting 250 years for us.' That was very amusing, but to anyone who could read the deeper facts of the university, the motto conveyed a profound and solemn truth. All this great, historic, institutional life had been, indeed, slowly evolved for the sake of these newly arrived, lighthearted boys, and now on their conduct were resting the destinies of the future."

'King for a Year'

IT is said that Sigmund Freud's favorite story is that of a sailor shipwrecked on a South Sea island. He wandered for some hours and saw no one. Then out from a small village a group of natives came running and dancing toward him. They hoisted him on their shoulders and took him to their village where they placed him on a crude throne. He gradually learned that it was their custom once each year in a special ceremony to take the first man they found and declare him king. Soon he wondered what they did with the old king. They pointed out a desolate isle, barely visible, to which the past king was exiled to die. But he was king for the year, so he set to planning. He put his carpenters to work making boats. Gardeners and laborers transported good soil and plants and lumber to the desert isle. Soon it was a fruitful place and when the year's end came he was banished, not to a desert isle to die, but to an isle of plenty. What are we doing with our "kingship for a year"?—*W. Glenn McFadden, Church of the Brethren, Troy, Ohio.*

Possibilities of Boys

PRESIDENT JAMES A. GARFIELD was devoted to young people, and especially to boys. He once said: "I feel a profounder reverence for a boy than a man. I never met a ragged boy on the street without feeling that I owe him a salute, for I know what possibilities may be buttoned up under that shabby coat."

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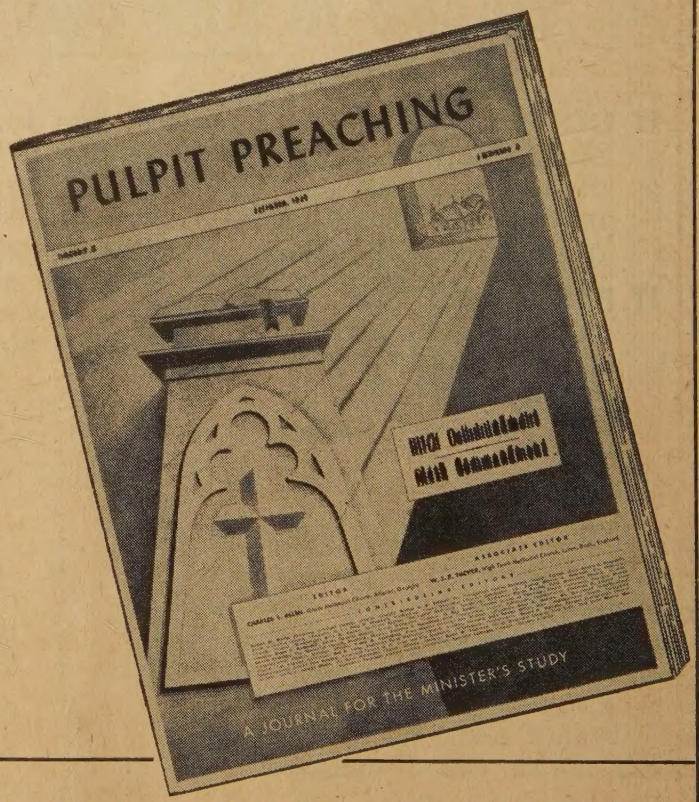

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